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ABSTRACT

This report compiles data submitted by state educational agencies in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. States are required to provide an estimate of: total number of homeless children and youth by grade level, number of homeless children and youth enrolled in public school by grade level, number of homeless children and youth regularly attending school by grade level, and primary nighttime residence of homeless children and youth. The greatest numbers of homeless children are at the preschool and elementary levels. Lower numbers reported for secondary school may be due to difficulties identifying older children and youth. Approximately 67 percent of identified homeless children and youth are enrolled in school. Excluding preschool, 87 percent of homeless children and youth attend school regularly. Most homeless children and youth identified in state reports live in shelters, doubled up with friends or relatives, or in other situations such as motels and campgrounds. Barriers to enrolling in and attending school include transportation, lack of official school records, immunization requirements, residency requirements, and providing birth certificates. Strategies for addressing issues in homeless education include increasing awareness of the problem and promoting interagency collaboration to meet children's needs. Tables on homeless children and youth are appended. (SM)

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ED 462 508

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

TITLE VII, SUBTITLE B
of the
McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

REPORT TO CONGRESS

FISCAL YEAR 2000

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This report is written in accordance with Section 722(f)(4) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII-B (42 USC 11431 et seq.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

UD034810

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Report to Congress
Fiscal Year 2000

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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REPORT TO CONGRESS

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Education

PROGRAM: Education for Homeless Children and Youth

STATUTE: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII-B (42 USC 11431 et seq.)

SUBJECT: A compilation of the reports submitted by States in accordance with Section 722(f)(4) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 722(f)(4) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, State educational agencies (SEAs) are instructed to submit reports to the Secretary every three years that include:

1. Estimates of the number and location of homeless children and youth in the States,
2. Comprehensive information on the nature and extent of the problems and barriers homeless children and youth experience in gaining access to public preschool programs and to public elementary and secondary schools, and
3. The difficulties in identifying the special needs of homeless children and youth, any progress made in the States in addressing such problems and difficulties, and the States' success in allowing homeless children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

State educational agencies (SEAs) in the 50 States, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands received fiscal year (FY) 2000 funds under this program. All States receiving program funds submitted reports to the Department. The District of Columbia is not included since the District has declined federal funds administered under this program. The Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands did not submit reports since they receive funds through a consolidated grants system.

The Department's prior reports to Congress stated that due to problems with gathering data on homeless children and youth, the information contained in the reports should be viewed with caution. In spite of efforts by the Department and the States, the problems associated with identification, duplication, extrapolation, and differing State definitions

of homelessness continue. We advise, therefore, that the information contained in this report also be viewed cautiously as estimates rather than as precise numbers[6]. For the purposes of the most recent data collection, the Department requested that States provide an estimate of the following: (1) total number of homeless children and youth by grade level; (2) the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in public school by grade level; (3) the number of homeless children and youth regularly attending school by grade level; and (4) the primary nighttime residence of homeless children and youth.

Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

The intent of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, is to ensure that all homeless children and youth have access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public pre-school education, as provided to other children and youth. The Act calls on States to review and revise their laws and policies to eliminate barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth and to include homeless students in the mainstream school environment.

Title VII-B grant funds are allocated to SEAs in order to support their State Office of Coordinator of Education of Homeless Children and Youth. The Coordinator facilitates communication and collaboration of the State educational agency (SEA) and other public and private agencies and organizations providing services to homeless children and youth and their families, in order to improve the provision of such services. States award subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) on the basis of need.

LEA subgrantees are required to establish or designate a homeless liaison within the school district. The liaison ensures that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in school, and that the children and their families receive educational services and referrals to health, dental, and mental health care and other services as appropriate. LEAs are required to develop, review, and revise policies to eliminate barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth. All school districts are required to eliminate barriers to ensure access to and success in educational opportunities for homeless children and youth, regardless whether they receive funds under McKinney-Vento.

SUMMARY OF DATA INCLUDED IN SEA REPORTS

This report compiles data submitted by States regarding the total number of homeless children and youth. The figures are only estimates. States and LEAs employ a wide variety of data-collection methodologies. For example, States do not collect data at the same time of the year. Data are not consistently collected by grade level. Not all school districts report data to their SEA and some States extrapolate their data. Despite these

[6] In reauthorizing the Act in 1999, Congress recognized the problems inherent with these data. States now provide estimates of the numbers of homeless children and youth in their States.

significant data limitations, the data can help identify important questions and issues related to the needs of homeless children and youth.

Key Findings

The greatest reported numbers of homeless children are at the preschool and elementary school levels. The lower numbers reported for junior high and high school may be due, in part, to difficulties in identifying older children and youth. Approximately 67 percent of identified homeless children and youth (Pre-K - 12) are enrolled in school. The low number of enrolled preschool age homeless children (40,265) suggests that this is an age group that is greatly underserved. Excluding preschool, the data show that 87 percent of homeless children and youth (K-12) are enrolled. Approximately 77 percent of homeless children and youth (K-12) attend school regularly. The vast majority of homeless children and youth identified in the State reports live in shelters, doubled up with friends or relatives, or in other situations such as motels and campgrounds.

States' Goals for Homeless Education

The following are the most commonly reported goals in homeless education reported by State coordinators:

1. Ensure access to free and appropriate education for homeless students.
2. Form successful interagency collaborations to coordinate services.
3. Provide technical assistance to school districts.
4. Increase awareness of issues surrounding homelessness.
5. Review and revise laws, regulations, and policies related to the education of homeless children and youth.
6. Provide transportation for homeless children to attend school and before- and after-school activities.
7. Implement a data collection system for identifying and tracking homeless students.

Reported reasons for why the above-mentioned goals have not been met include:

1. Staff turnover in school districts, schools, and local agencies.
2. Lack of awareness of the needs of homeless children and youth and their families.
3. Difficulty in identifying homeless children.
4. More homeless students than staff are able to serve effectively.
5. Limited funding.

BARRIERS TO THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

State and local policies are designed to protect children, but sometimes make it more difficult for homeless children and youth to succeed academically. The following is a listing of frequent problems reported by State coordinators that homeless students face in attempting to enroll in school and attend school regularly.

Barrier	Number of States Reporting
Transportation	28
Immunization requirements	25
Residency requirements	24
Providing birth certificates	22
Legal guardianship requirements	22
Lack of preschool programs	19
Lack of availability of school records	18
Physical examination requirements	14

LEA STRATEGIES TO REMOVE BARRIERS

LEAs are required to develop, review, and revise policies to eliminate barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth. The following is a list of reported strategies utilized to promote academic success for homeless students.

1. Facilitating immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth by
    a) providing a temporary waiver for enrollment documentation;
    b) providing a liaison to assist parents with finding records;
    c) instituting a State law which provides a 30-day grace period for providing documentation required by the school;
    d) instituting a State law which allows the family/ school to appoint a guardian for the children in cases where the parent is absent;
    e) allowing homeless pre-kindergarten students immediate enrollment.

2. Allowing children to remain in their school of origin prior to their episode of homelessness.

3. Increasing homelessness awareness by
    a) providing staff development to school personnel;
    b) disseminating information to the public about homeless children and youth;
    c) hosting a web page on homeless education on SEA websites;
    d) presenting at conferences.

4. Strengthening homeless education programs by
    a) conducting site visits to programs supported with McKinney-Vento funds;
    b) distributing publications, manuals, and guidance to district homeless education coordinators and key school staff;
    c) designating a homeless education liaison in every district;
    d) creating partnerships for LEA, SEA, and agency coordination.

5. Passing State legislation that supports the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

6. Conducting State level and district level policy reviews and revisions.

Unique Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

Homeless children and youth require direct and indirect services to ensure optimal academic success. The following is a list of the needs of homeless children and their programming requirements most often reported by SEAs.

Major Need	Number of States Reporting
Tutoring / Remedial	39
Parent Training	34
Medical Services	33
Counseling	33
Transportation	33
Agency Coordination	29
Preschool Programs	28
Free lunch / breakfast	27
Staff development	24
School Supplies	22
Case Management	21

Federal Programs that Homeless Students Have Difficulty Accessing

Schools must provide services to homeless children and youth that are comparable to services offered to other students. Most federal education programs are required to serve homeless students; however, many States report that homeless students have difficulty accessing these programs.

Program	Number of States Reporting	Reasons for Difficulties
Head Start	31	limited program capacity, program availability, transportation
Special Education	25	timely testing, transfer of school records, family mobility
Even Start	24	limited program capacity, program availability, transportation
Title I	24	limited program capacity, program availability, not serving preschoolers, difficulty identifying homeless children and youth
Adult & Vocational Education	18	limited program capacity, program availability, lack of awareness of programs

Challenges and Solutions to Removing Access Problems

Following are the most frequently cited challenges for homeless children and youth to access federal programs and strategies for addressing the challenges, as well as strategies and policies that States and districts are using to overcome these challenges. Rural districts in particular report that programs such as Head Start, Even Start, and Adult and Vocational Education are frequently unavailable and limited in their resources and enrollment capacity. High mobility poses difficulties in identifying homeless children and testing them and accessing records from their prior school so that they may receive services before their family moves again.

Challenges to Accessing Federal and State Programs	Strategies and Policies to Remove Accessing Problems
Limited Access to Preschool Programs	Institute immediate enrollment policies
Resistance to Change in Educational Practice	Conduct activities for school and district personnel to increase homeless awareness
Limited Funding	Utilize Title I reservation of funds
Transportation	Collaborate with Title I and district grant programs
High Mobility of Homeless Students	Designate local homeless program coordinators to track and assist students
Lack of Understanding of McKinney-Vento Legislation	Provide in-service training for school and district personnel; develop and disseminate manuals

YEAR 2000 NATIONWIDE STATUS OF HOMELESS EDUCATION

Number of Homeless Children and Youth

- The estimated number of homeless children and youth (PreK-12) has increased from approximately 841,700 reported in 1997 to 930,200 reported in 2000.
- Preschool and elementary age children comprise the largest numbers of homeless children reported by the SEAs.
- Year 2000 data show that approximately 87 percent of school age homeless children and youth (K-12) are enrolled in school. These figures are not a significant change from the 1997 data.
- Year 2000 data show that approximately 77 percent of school age homeless children and youth (K-12) attend school regularly. These data show a significant change from the 1997 data which indicated that only 55 percent of school age homeless children and youth attended school regularly.
- Only 15 percent of preschool age homeless children are enrolled in school programs. These data suggests that preschool age homeless children are greatly underserved by homeless education programs.

Issues in Homeless Education

- Transportation remains the biggest barrier for homeless children enrolling in school and accessing available programs and services. Transportation issues include transporting children to and from school and before- and after-school activities. Ensuring that homeless children may remain in their school of origin (the school they attended before their homelessness) create additional transportation challenges.
- Many schools and communities are unaware of those who are homeless, the number of homeless in their community, and what their needs are.
- School district policies frequently pose enrollment barriers for homeless children and youth. Children and parents who are highly mobile generally do not carry immunization records, birth certificates, and proof of guardianship, and schools experience delays in transferring records. As a result, in many districts, children in homeless families are turned away from a new school until these issues are resolved. Without sufficient advocacy, many homeless children experience extended disruptions in their education.
- Homeless children often need greater access to federal and State programs. Many homeless children are unable to participate in programs due to challenges created by high mobility. Homeless children are frequently isolated from programs that other eligible children can access easily.

Strategies for Addressing Issues in Homeless Education

- Efforts to increase awareness hold much promise for sensitizing communities and schools to the needs of homeless children and youth. As school and school district personnel better understand the needs of homeless children and youth, they implement policies and practices that ensure access to school and support for success in school. Many State and local homeless education coordinators conduct extensive awareness activities.
- State coordinators use a variety of methods to ensure that schools and school districts understand and uphold the McKinney-Vento Act. Information dissemination activities include the publication of guidances and manuals, holding State conferences for homeless education, and providing web pages on SEA websites. Several State coordinators visit McKinney-Vento program sites and offer assistance in program evaluation. Several States have designated a homeless education contact in all districts, not just those with McKinney-Vento programs.
- Interagency collaboration is key to meeting the needs of homeless children and youth. School districts that collaborate with local agencies and shelters are able to provide comprehensive services that are continuous and non-duplicative. State homeless coalitions reinforce statewide collaboration.

Appendices

Table 1: Homeless Children and Youth By Grade Level - Estimated Totals, and Numbers Enrolled and Regularly Attending School

State	Not Specified	Pre-K		Elementary School			Junior High School			High School			Total (P-12)		
	estimated	estimated	enrolled	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly
Alabama	-	-	-	1,982	1,982	1,982	2,795	2,795	2,795	1,555	1,555	1,555	6,332	6,332	6,332
Alaska	-	966	258	1,325	1,074	831	1,256	1,042	733	2,119	1,579	853	5,666	3,953	2,417
Arizona	-	-	259	-	5,625	3,811	-	3,035[2]	2,041[2]	-	1,790[2]	1,036[2]	-	10,709	6,888
Arkansas	-	490	130	3,699	3,315	3,307	1,312	952	938	1,114	984	750	6,615	5,381	4,995
California	-	111,812	-	86,580	74,025[3]	74,025	27,236	23,352[3]	23,352[3]	63,398	54,205[3]	54,205[3]	289,026	151,582	151,582
Colorado	-	2,131	350	2,564	2,212	2,197	1,068	921	915	641	553	549	6,404	4,036	3,661
Connecticut	-	286	-	1,670	1,670	1,670	1,071	1,071	1,071	410	410	410	3,437	3,151	3,151
Delaware	-	310	109	879	879	879	620	620	620	258	253	253	2,067	1,861	1,752
Florida	-	8,921	2,000	14,821	10,818	10,233	9,900	5,433	5,018	7,768	5,285	4,756	41,410	23,536	20,007
Georgia	-	4,710	4,004	7,158	6,800	6,461	4,772	4,533	4,306	2,983	2,834	2,962	19,623	18,171	13,729
Hawaii	-	831	48	616	314	314	109	123	123	226	110	103	1,782	595	540
Idaho	-	177	84	384	312	275	425	404	401	497	391	354	1,483	1,191	1,030
Illinois	-	5,777	427	5,469	4,432	4,080	2,415	1,580	1,395	2,713	1,835	486	16,374	8,274	5,961
Indiana	-	10,500	-	10,164	10,164	10,164	4,862	4,862	4,862	3,474	3,474	3,474	29,000	18,500	18,500
Iowa	544	3,146	702	1,824	1,662	1,249	3,555	3,239	2,435	3,460	3,152	2,370	12,529	8,755	6,054
Kansas	-	761	137	1,194	1,194	1,042	773	773	647	573	506	506	3,301	2,610	2,195
Kentucky	-	1,179	1,179	5,985	5,985	5,985	1,277	1,277	1,277	1,074	1,074	1,074	9,515	9,515	8,336
Louisiana	-	3,181	1,590	6,321	6,321	6,321	4,070	4,070	4,070	2,304	2,304	2,304	15,876	14,285	12,695
Maine	-	-	-	-	-	- -	205	-	-	798	-	-	1,003	-	-
Maryland	-	1,402	-[4]	2,494	2,494	-[4]	1,088	1,088	-[4]	769	769	-[4]	5,753	4,351	-
Massachusetts	-	606	606	1,879	1,643	1,434	885	798	647	718	539	4,600	4,088	3,586	6,681
Michigan	-	7,800	6,300	13,900	11,100	9,000	8,700	7,000	5,700	13,000	10,400	8,500	43,400	34,800	23,200
Minnesota	-	1,124	340	980	856	856	292	256	256	303	265	265	2,699	1,717	1,377
Mississippi	-	4,750	1,709	3,579	3,579	3,381	4,486	4,486	4,253	2,861	2,861	2,455	15,676	12,635	10,089
Missouri	-	5,688	999	8,903	7,420	7,123	5,367	4,000	3,916	3,257	2,847	2,792	23,215	15,266	13,831
Montana	-	460	300	742	712	730	513	503	481	1,020	992	887	2,735	2,507	2,098

- Data not provided
[2] Only 34 school districts responded
[3] Data extrapolated based on 85.5% of identified homeless children and youth
[4] State tracking system does not follow homeless students once enrolled

State	Not Specified	Pre-K		Elementary School			Junior High School			High School			Total (P-12)		
	estimated	estimated	enrolled	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly	estimated	enrolled	attending regularly
Nebraska	-	1,786	387	2,171	1,717	1,535	878	708	640	1,602	1,082	960	6,437	3,894	3,135
Nevada	-	195	181	1,721	1,720	1,720	557	556	556	268	268	268	2,741	2,725	2,544
New Hampshire	-	4	-	210	210	-[5]	59	59	-[5]	200	200	-[5]	473	469	-
New Jersey	-	1,626	201	2,269	1,944	1,029	790	779	315	676	540	346	5,361	3,464	1,690
New Mexico	-	719	160	2,363	2,363	2,363	1,044	1,044	1,044	992	992	992	5,118	4,559	4,399
New York	-	1,522	-	4,523	-	-	1,786	-	-	1,334	-	-	9,165	-	-
North Carolina	-	2,727	-	1,500	-	-	1,060	-	-	1,500	-	-	6,787	-	-
North Dakota	-	20	-	94	-[6]	-[6]	32	-[6]	-[6]	86	-[6]	-[6]	232	-	-
Ohio	-	6,701	609	11,606	11,302	8,659	5,705	5,367	3,978	5,670	5,109	3,941	29,682	22,387	16,578
Oklahoma	-	410	275	3,575	2,583	1,572	1,655	810	805	1,364	793	408	7,004	4,461	2,785
Oregon	-	15,290	2,293	11,040	9,825	9,825	3,860	2,972	2,972	2,560	1,689	1,689	32,750	16,779	14,486
Pennsylvania	-	7,500	1,575	7,500	7,225	7,000	3,200	3,000	2,800	2,800	2,500	2,300	21,000	14,300	12,100
Puerto Rico	-	61	61	1,106	40	1,106	327	37	327	224	23	224	1,718	161	1,657
Rhode Island	-	517	172	472	425	381	315	148	138	327	187	163	1,631	932	682
South Carolina	-	943	312	3,040	2,867	2,828	1,555	1,437	1,394	1,046	941	888	6,584	5,557	5,110
South Dakota	-	1,656	-	2,260	2,260	2,011	685	685	610	372	372	331	4,973	3,317	2,952
Tennessee	-	1,729	379	2,261	2,132	2,132	1,070	695	695	558	218	218	5,618	3,424	3,045
Texas	-	17,884	4,471	82,035	74,980	56,235	33,159	30,308	22,731	17,531	16,023	12,017	150,609	125,782	90,983
Utah	-	1,431	533	4,226	3,991	3,714	1,558	1,498	1,354	1,568	1,488	1,307	8,783	7,510	6,375
Vermont	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Virginia	-	5,217	1,504	6,930	6,526	6,082	2,846	2,764	2,482	1,985	1,724	1,386	16,978	12,518	9,950
Washington	9,446	6,257	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,703	-	-
West Virginia	-	182	136	1,503	1,478	1,014	978	939	923	1,512	1,411	1,363	4,175	3,964	3,300
Wisconsin	-	5,670	5,464	5,567	5,494	5,100	3,672	3,656	3,470	1,984	1,964	1,737	16,893	16,578	10,307
Wyoming	-	21	21	256	250	250	121	110	110	410	303	303	808	684	663
Totals	**9,990**	**257,076**	**40,265**	**343,340**	**305,920**	**271,906**	**155,964**	**135,785**	**119,596**	**163,862**	**138,794**	**128,340**	**930,232**	**620,764**	**519,842**

- Data not provided

[5] State tracking system does not follow homeless students once enrolled

[6] State survey did not ask how many homeless children were enrolled in public schools

TABLE 2: Primary Nighttime Residence of Homeless Children and Youth

State	Shelters	Doubled-up	Un-sheltered	Other (motels, etc.)	Unknown	Total
Alabama	2984	3243	105	-	-	6332
Alaska	1057	548	160	723	3178	5666
Arizona[7]	1288	6225	841	1408	1416	11,178
Arkansas	2629	1442	127	190	1136	5524
California	61,182	80,058	17,640	130,145	-	289,025
Colorado	1773	1976	436	1226	893	6404
Connecticut	3151	-	-	-	-	3151
Delaware	1100	-	-	-	-	1100
Florida	-	-	-	-	-	-
Georgia	14,717	3287	-	1619	-	19,623
Hawaii	563	80	388	-	-	1031
Idaho	218	452	13	45	28	756
Illinois	1547	14,567	260	-	-	16,374
Indiana	14,060	11,200	1400	840	1500	29,000
Iowa	4656	3709	117	303	598	9383
Kansas	2075	1175	43	61	20	3374
Kentucky	1294	5798	702	250	292	8336
Louisiana	10,438	4873	565	-	-	15,876
Maine	4913	-	-	-	-	4913
Maryland	3618	820	-	1086	229	5753
Massachusetts	-	-	-	-	-	-
Michigan	28,900	11,376	2054	3043	2528	47,901
Minnesota	2396	-	-	-	303	2699
Mississippi[8]	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missouri	7264	6741	5094	2277	207	21,583
Montana	1113	1127	168	157	170	2735
Nebraska	5119	786	94	719	445	7163
Nevada	192	992	35	485	-	1704
New Hampshire[9]	4	-	-	-	-	4
New Jersey	6435	1064	5	8940	71	16,515
New Mexico	682	1264	-	269	-	2215
New York	9165	-	-	-	-	9165
North Carolina	-	-	-	-	-	-
North Dakota	93	130	-	8	1	232
Ohio	7124	17,809	2968	-	1780	29,681
Oklahoma	2998	3793	127	-	-	6918

- Data not provided.
[7] Only 34 school districts responded
[8] Data was reported by percentages; shelters-23%; doubled-up-75%; unsheltered-2%.
[9] Data was requested but was not consistently reported by school districts.

State	Shelters	Doubled-up	Un-sheltered	Other (motels, etc.)	Unknown	Total
Oregon	12,540	4390	2900	12,000	920	32,750
Pennsylvania	17,000	3000	1000	-	-	21,000
Puerto Rico	649	100	100	858	500	2207
Rhode Island	1286	53	1	1	2	1343
South Carolina	1731	4219	33	196	36	6215
South Dakota	2968	1245	381	-	379	4973
Tennessee	2300	2600	275	443	-	5618
Texas	29,910	90,728	-	29,975	-	150,613
Utah	1668	3845	282	2402	581	8778
Vermont[16]	-	-	-	-	276	276
Virginia	12,631	2649	174	572	952	16,978
Washington	15,703	-	-	-	-	15,703
West Virginia	402	2061	-	355	651	3469
Wisconsin	2718	1220	244	617	55	4854
Wyoming	150	550	-	-	108	808
Totals	**306,404**	**301,195**	**38,732**	**201,313**	**19,255**	**866,899**

- Data not provided.